THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, the Communication Convergence Bill, 2001, introduced in Lok Sabha on 31.8.2001, has a provision in its present from that National or international events of general public interest, notified by Government in advance, shall have to be carried on the network of public service broadcaster as well. The Communications Commission shall however determine, well in advance of such event, the principles and terms for the access to the network of public service broadcaster.

(c) to (e) The Narayana Murthy Committee has *inter-alia* recommended that Prasar Bharati should explore the feasibility of a strategic tie-up initially with MTNL and subsequently with the Department of Telecom Services to set up an independent cable TV arm making maximal use of the existing MTNL/DTS infrastructure and supplementing it wherever necessary. It was also recommended that a beginning be made first in Mumbai and Delhi through MTNL, so that problems of convergence can be ironed out before proceeding to other locations. Prasar Bharati has signed an Moll with MTNL for cooperating in exploring new business opportunities and for utilising their fibre optic networks for carriage of Doordarshan service.

Viewership survey in regard to DD Bharati Channel

531. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether any viewership survey was conducted in regard to DD Bharati Channel which was recently launched.

(b) if so, the findings thereof;

(c) if not, whether any such survey will be conducted in future; and

(d) the specific measures taken for popularising the channel along the young ones?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has intimated that a study has been done in regard to DD Bharati Channel in three cities *i.e.* Delhi, Jaipur and Jalandhar. Viewership data of the three cities indicates that a niche audience is developing slowly for these channels.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) DD Bharati telecasts atleast six hours of children progammes daily.To popularise the channel, the variety of programmes offered include adventure series, quiz contests, fine and performing arts, magazines, children news, science programmes, environmental preservation issues, etc., alongwith live interactive shows like "Meri Baat".

Discrimination on appointment of NER candidates in Prasar Bharati

532. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Prasar Bharati has acted under the influence of a lobby to deprive deserving candidates of NER by selecting persons only from outside the region against 157 posts falling vacant in NER as published in the news-item in 'Asomiya Praditin', Guwahati Edition dated 24th June, 2002;

(b) if so, whether there were only 4 candidates of NER selected against 197 vacancies during 1998 and presently none from the region against 157 vacancies belonging to NER; and

(c) if so, the remedial measures taken to remove such a well planned discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATISUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) No, Sir.The Recruitment Rules provide for direct recruitment of Engineering Assistants and this is done by inviting applications from eligible candidates on All India basis. The selection is based on merit as assessed in a written examination. There is no reservation for candidates of any particular State, in a zone.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Programmes of AIR.Trivandrum

533. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether programmes of All India Radio, Trivandrum station were abandoned recently; and